



California Postsecondary Education Commission

770 L Street, Suite 1160 • Sacramento, California 95814

www.cpec.ca.gov • (916) 445-1000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Karen Humphrey

khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov • (916) 445-1504

Fresno State Awarded \$968,370 Improving Teacher Quality Grant

SACRAMENTO — October 22, 2007 — California State University, Fresno has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve teaching in kindergarten through second grade in the core content area of mathematics. The university was awarded a four-year grant of \$968,370 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in a statewide competition. The project, titled “Mathematics Understanding, Learning, and Teaching (MULT),” is a partnership between Fresno State, the San Joaquin Valley Mathematics Project, Riverdale Unified School District, and Chowchilla School district, and Robinson Elementary in Fresno Unified School District.

The project will provide 50 teachers in rural Fresno and Madera County schools with intensive training institutes and school-site support in Cognitively Guided Instruction, which has been shown effective in helping young students learn mathematical concepts. It also includes Japanese Lesson Study, where teachers work as teams to develop and refine lesson plans for their students; the outcomes are greater teacher expertise and lesson plans that can be used by their colleagues in the future. One outcome of the project will be convening of a Lesson Study Conference for San Joaquin Valley educators that will be held during the project’s final year.

The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. In the two decades that CPEC has administered the program, more than \$93 million in grants have been awarded to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2007 grants all focus on supporting teachers in kindergarten through second grade in participating schools. They also require rigorous evaluation research to demonstrate how the professional development affects student achievement as well as teacher practice.

While the professional development provided by the grants is vitally needed, the research requirement is especially important, according to CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. He observed that “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on student achievement, not just on teacher practice, is critical and supports CPEC’s overall commitment to accountability in educational programs.”

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Olivia Singh, chair of the Commission, says the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. “The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform,” noted Singh. “Fresno State and its partner schools should be proud of the quality of their proposal and its potential for improving teaching and learning in rural areas of the San Joaquin Valley.”

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov. For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov. For information on the project described above, contact Dr. Melanie Wenrick at 559-278-0238 or mwenrick@csufresno.edu.

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